

BOOK REVIEW

SUSAN McCLURE.1996. **The Herb Gardener: A Guide for All Seasons. (Paperback edition).** (ISBN 0-88266-873-0, pbk.). Storey Publishing, 210 MASS MoCA Way, North Adams, MA, 01247. U.S.A. (**Orders:** # 66873, 1-800-441-5700; www.storey.com). \$14.95, 236 pp., color photographs and drawings, appendices, index, 8 3/8" × 10".

Gardeners and cooks alike will learn a great deal from *The Herb gardener: A Guide for All Seasons*. Author Susan McClure has created a comprehensive compendium for people interested in herb gardening; subjects include a background on designing, garden duties throughout the year, crafts and projects, as well as a growing guide.

The book is divided into five main parts concerning subjects such as herbs, herb gardening Basics, seasonal planning in the garden, herb projects, and a grower's guide.

The gardening basics chapter shows the reader items to consider in planning a garden and it also aids in designing a garden space. General preplanning considerations are discussed including plant life cycles, and plant tolerances. Also included are environmental considerations before you plant (sun, soil, fertilizer, pH, water, etc.). The portion of this chapter on designing your garden will be incredibly helpful information for most readers. The author has included many different garden types/shapes such as hardscape considerations, included labeling suggestions and maintenance thoughts.

The section about yearlong gardening divides the year up into the four seasons and provides gardeners with typical, well-organized information on tasks that should occur during each period of the year. One of the very helpful features in this book are the side boxes and charts that appear throughout the text; examples are the seed sprouting facts chart in the Spring period, harvesting techniques and troubling pests and diseases charts in the summer period, first frost estimator in the fall period, and plants for an indoor garden in the winter period.

The section on recipes and crafts helps both gardeners and cooks reap the benefits of the planning and herbal harvest. This portion includes multiple methods of preserving herbs for longer-term use, good herbal combinations, recipes, herbal vinegars, cheese and butters, potpourris and wreaths. It also includes a helpful summary of nutritional value for the common herbs.

The final section of the book includes a very useful grower's guide. This section provides readers with plant profiles along with photographs of 52+ herbal plants; information is included on many varieties as well. Profiles for herbs are organized by scientific name, but also include common names, plant appearance, propagation, cultivars, potential problems, harvesting, use, and more. Each profile has summaries of information in the forms of colorful icons for quick reference.

If you have a hankering to make your own pesto or create your own herbal seasoning blend, check out *The Herb Gardener: A Guide for All Seasons* and plan your own herbal garden. McClure has written a text that is easy to read and easy to use. It's full of helpful side boxes, charts and herbal profiles. This book would be a great addition to the library of gardeners, cooks and herbal connoisseurs.—Lee Luckeydoo, Herbarium, Botanical Research Institute of Texas, 509 Pecan Street, Fort Worth, TX 76102-4060, U.S.A.